

Department of Social and Health Services

DP Code/Title: PL-KB Direct Service FTEs
Program Level - 100 Vocational Rehabilitation

Budget Period: 2003-05 Version: 11 2003-05 Agency Request Budget

Recommendation Summary Text:

Additional counseling FTEs are required in order to maximize services to the greatest number of individuals with disabilities possible within the federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Basic Support Grant. Increasing the number of counseling FTEs will result in significant improvements in quality and timeliness of services, generation of new program revenues, and an increase in employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Fiscal Detail:

Operating Expenditures

FY 1 **FY 2** **Total**

Program Cost

Total Cost

Staffing

FY 1 **FY 2** **Annual Avg**

Program 100 FTEs **20.0** **20.0** **20.0**

Package Description:

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) took significant FTE reductions in the 1993-95 Biennium, and staffing levels have remained static since then. Demand for VR services, on the other hand, has continued to grow, especially among those with the most significant disabilities. Initiatives such as the Ticket to Work, TANF/Workfirst, IDEA, and WIA have resulted in an influx of individuals with significant disabilities and DVR no longer has adequate resources to serve all eligible individuals.

Under current FTE limits, counselors cannot serve the number of individuals with disabilities who are eligible for and need VR services to become employed. This leaves people unserved, or delays services, and reduces the number of people who move from public support to self-sufficiency.

Insufficient FTEs also results in DVR's inability to use all the federal funding available to serve individuals who need employment. Because of federal maintenance of effort requirements, if we are unable to use these funds in the specified period, future federal allocations could be negatively impacted.

This request for additional FTE authority addresses the demand for services while still managing within the federal VR Basic Support Grant.

The following is the history of DVR's FTEs:

Biennium	# of FTEs
1993-95	346
1995-97	337
1997-99	336
1999-01	340
2001-03	337

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

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How contributes to strategic plan:

This step supports the strategic goal to improve the quality of customer service.

This request relates to the following Department of Social and Health Services balance scorecard items: Determine eligibility accurately and quickly assess needs and target services; services are easy to access and timely; and services are high quality.

Performance Measure Detail

Program: 100

**Goal: 05J Promote Self-Sufficiency and Self-Determination for
 individuals w/ disabilities**

Incremental Changes

FY 1

FY 2

Output Measures

5J4 Number of plans written.

250

250

Reason for change:

DVR receives regular annual adjustments in its federal VR Basic Support Grant based on increases in population and adjustments for average personal income. This proposal would restore counseling staff to a level that enables DVR to fully spend the basic support grant and assist the maximum number of individuals with disabilities possible to become employed.

OOS is a procedure in which caseloads are tightly monitored and priority is given to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities. Under the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (amended 1998), when DVR is unable to serve all potential applicants due to either a shortage of staff or funds, it must implement OOS.

DVR took significant FTE reductions in the 1993-95 Biennium, and staffing levels have changed little since then. This has affected the ability of field staff to keep up with an increasing workload due to the increase in the number of significantly disabled clients requesting services. As part of the 2003-05 Biennial Budget request, DVR has asked for additional FTEs to help alleviate case service pressures as compared to funding expectations.

Impact on clients and services:

Additional FTEs will enable DVR to provide timelier VR services to a greater number of individuals with disabilities. Currently, DVR maintains a waiting list for services because there are not enough counselors to serve all eligible individuals. Additional FTEs will enable DVR to reduce or possibly eliminate the waiting list and serve all eligible individuals at the time of application/eligibility.

Additional FTEs will also improve DVR's ability to achieve federal performance standards and to retain and expend the full basic support grant available.

Stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities who want to work, advocates, other program partners, and DVR federal partners will approve and support this proposal.

Impact on other state programs:

None

Relationship to capital budget:

None

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Required changes to existing RCW, WAC, contract, or plan:

None

Alternatives explored by agency:

DVR has already gone through an internal reorganization effort to reclassify as many administrative and management positions as possible to caseload carrying counselor positions. While this has increased service delivery capacity, there is still a gap between the funding available and counselor capacity.

DVR is also pursuing the identification and procurement of services from community providers that can assist by providing services to DVR clients that support the VR process. The current pool of resources and purchasing systems are inadequate and inefficient.

Federal regulations designate certain decisions and actions as the sole responsibility of a VR counselor.

Budget impacts in future biennia:

This step increases DVR's FTE base and will carry forward into ensuing biennium.

Distinction between one-time and ongoing costs:

These will be ongoing FTEs.

Effects of non-funding:

- Non-funding will continue to erode DVR's ability to meet program goals and priorities.
- DVR will continue to maintain waiting lists for services.
- Individuals will experience delays or will go unserved.
- The timeliness of services, including how long it takes individuals to become employed, is impaired.
- Fewer people are able to move from public support to self-sufficiency.
- DVR is unable to achieve its federal standards, which may result in corrective action and possible funding reductions.
- DVR will carry-over unspent funds from its basic support grant, risking future funding reductions.
- DVR's ability to generate revenues through social security reimbursements is impaired.

Expenditure Calculations and Assumptions:

The number of FTEs requested is based on the ability of caseload-carrying staff in DVR field services (150 counselors) to meet the needs of a growing population of potential applicants. While staff increases have not been authorized since the 1993-95 Biennium, there have been regular increases in DVR's basic support grant to account for population growth.

The state's population increase is used as an indicator of the growth in the number of disabled persons, representing the number of potential applicants. Based on OFM population estimates, between 1995 and 2001 the state's population will have increased by approximately 9 percent, resulting in a need for 20 additional FTEs.

Object Detail

FY 1

FY 2

Total

Program Totals

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DSHS Source Code Detail

Fund ,	<u>FY 1</u>	<u>FY 2</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Sources</u> <u>Title</u>			

Total for Fund

Total

Totals for all funds